Research Note

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NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN POLE PRODUCTION CONTINUES CLIMB IN 1956

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Pole production in the northern Rocky Mountain area[1/] increased sharply during 1956 after showing only slight recovery in 1955 from the record low of 1954. The annual pole production survey[2/] for 1956 shows that output increased 96 percent over that for 1955 and was 108 percent above that for 1954.

Of the four species currently used for commercial poles, lodgepole pine and western redcedar make up about three-quarters of the annual production (table 1). Lodgepole pine led all four species with its total of nearly 237,000 poles produced, all of which came from Montana.

Table 1.--Poles produced in northern Rocky Mountain area, 1956

Species	Montana	North Idaho	Northeast Washington	Total	Percent of total
			Number		
Western redcedar	1,998	90,018	101,377	193,393	33.48
Lodgepole pine	236,655	0	0	236,655	40.97
Western larch	36,903	36,056	38,309	111,268	19.26
Douglas-fir	28,079	6,285	1,970	36,334	6.29
Total	303,635	132,359	141,656	577,650	
Percent	52.57	22.91	24.52		100.00

1/ Includes Montana; Idaho, north of the Salmon River; and Ferry, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, and Whitman Counties in northeastern Washington.

2/ Sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Pole and Treating Association, Spokane, Washington. The Association contacted all known pole-producing companies with operations in the area. The excellent cooperation of these companies is greatly appreciated. Pole production which is not accounted for in this report is estimated to be less than 1 percent of the total.

Production from all species showed strong increases in numbers over those for 1955, but the most marked increases were in lodgepole pine and Douglas-fir (table 2). However, the latter species is the only one showing a higher rate of production than that of 1947.

Table 2.--Percent change in 1956 pole production from previous year and peak production year

Species	Change from	
	1955	1947
Western redcedar	+47	-16
Lodgepole pine	+149	-33
Western larch	+80	-50
Douglas-fir	+512	+461
Other	0	-100
Total	+96	-29

Total pole production in the northern Rocky Mountain area in 1956 was the third highest for any year since 1947 (table 3). Lodgepole pine displaced western redcedar as the leading species for the first time since 1947, and Douglas-fir pole production was the highest on record.

Table 3.--Total number of poles produced in the northern Rocky Mountain area 1947-1956

Year	Species					Total
	Western redcedar	Lodgepole pine	Western larch	Douglas-fir	Other 1/	
1947	230,872	351,310	221,990	6,473	6,557	817,202
1948	212,785	136,099	90,879	5,419	804	447,986
1949	286,116	186,262	121,214	5,720	--	599,312
1950	217,049	92,338	71,651	9,070	--	390,108
1951	192,271	136,628	126,332	10,116	--	465,347
1952	217,721	104,621	152,761	19,049	--	494,152
1953	191,551	128,523	90,245	3,516	--	413,835
1954	138,624	101,842	36,938	768	--	278,172
1955	131,860	95,027	61,688	5,941	--	294,516
1956	193,393	236,655	111,268	36,334	--	577,650
Total	2,012,242	1,571,305	1,084,966	102,406	7,361	4,778,280
Percent	42	33	23	2	(2/)	100

1/ Mostly ponderosa pine.
2/ Less than 0.5 percent.

The preceding discussion has concerned only poles which were grown and cut in the northern Rocky Mountain area. Additional poles are imported from Canada and the West Coast section of the United States and processed at yards in this area (table 4). Total imports in 1956 were 63 percent greater than those of 1955. Western redcedar made up 80 percent of the total imports.

Table 4.--Total production of processed poles by source and species, 1956

Species	Northern Rocky Mountain	Canada	West Coast	Total	Percent of total
Western redcedar	193,393	100,338	199	293,930	41.80
Lodgepole pine	236,655	0	0	236,655	33.65
Western larch	111,268	24,463	0	135,731	19.30
Douglas-fir	36,334	115	454	36,903	5.25
Total	577,650	124,916	653	703,219	
Percent	82.15	17.76	.09		100.00

While most of the poles grown in the northern Rocky Mountain area are processed within the area along with imported poles, a small number are shipped to processing yards elsewhere. These outside yards, mainly in Minnesota, received 16,216 poles (or 2.8 percent of the total 1956 production) directly from the northern Rocky Mountain area.

Table 5 classifies the 1956 pole production of the northern Rocky Mountain area by species, lengths, and American Standards Association class.

Table 5.--Classification of 1956 pole production in the northern Rocky Mountain area by species, lengths, and A.S.A. class

Pole length: Feet	A. S. A. Class 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	All
	Percent of total										
					Western redcedar						
25	0.34	0.24	0.33	0.68	1.59	2.18	1.69	0.71	1.65	0.19	9.60
30	.22	.31	.53	1.33	3.15	4.23	3.13	.49	.26	1/0	13.65
35	.31	.50	1.68	4.39	9.77	6.75	2.22	.11	0	0	25.73
40	.45	.85	2.69	6.99	7.27	1.19	.02	0	0	0	19.46
45	.50	1.14	2.86	5.33	1.54	.04	0	0	0	0	11.41
50	.58	1.37	2.47	3.07	.31	0	0	0	0	0	7.80
55	1.97	3.89	4.53	1.90	.06	0	0	0	0	0	12.35
All	4.37	8.30	15.09	23.69	23.69	14.39	7.06	1.31	1.91	.19	100.00
					Lodgepole pine						
25	.01	.03	.09	.31	1.00	3.23	8.45	2.59	15.27	23.69	54.67
30	.01	.04	.11	.31	1.20	2.80	6.49	.86	3.91	4.33	20.06
35	.01	.05	.16	.76	4.02	6.27	4.06	.46	(2/)	0	15.79
40	.01	.07	.56	1.90	3.00	1.51	(2/)	0	0	0	7.05
45	.01	.10	.60	.75	.25	.03	0	0	0	0	1.74
50	.01	.08	.19	.14	.02	(2/)	0	0	0	0	.44
55	.01	.07	.11	.06	(2/)	0	0	0	0	0	.25
All	.07	.44	1.82	4.23	9.49	13.84	19.00	3.91	19.18	28.02	100.00
					Western larch						
25	.11	.08	.13	.58	.86	2.09	3.49	.29	1.55	.98	10.16
30	.39	.18	.38	1.24	4.24	5.49	4.48	.14	.68	0	17.22
35	.52	.47	1.59	5.03	11.80	6.61	2.50	.04	0	0	28.56
40	.67	.84	3.17	8.39	5.02	.94	.11	0	0	0	19.14
45	.20	.78	2.72	4.45	.82	.12	0	0	0	0	9.09
50	.30	1.15	2.44	1.35	.17	0	0	0	0	0	5.41
55	2.77	3.63	3.25	.77	(2/)	0	0	0	0	0	10.42
All	4.96	7.13	13.68	21.81	22.91	15.25	10.58	.47	2.23	.98	100.00
					Douglas-fir						
25	.07	.03	.09	.28	.44	.69	.76	(2/)	.03	.03	2.42
30	.79	.84	1.33	2.08	2.55	2.48	1.77	(2/)	.02	0	11.86
35	.80	1.14	2.57	10.05	10.18	6.53	1.45	(2/)	0	0	32.72
40	1.32	2.74	4.61	10.26	7.05	1.55	(2/)	0	0	0	27.53
45	.31	1.01	3.92	4.83	2.40	.21	0	0	0	0	12.68
50	.44	1.16	2.23	.99	.14	0	0	0	0	0	4.96
55	1.27	2.85	3.00	.68	.03	0	0	0	0	0	7.83
All	5.00	9.77	17.75	29.17	22.79	11.46	3.98	(2/)	.05	.03	100.00
					All species						
25	.14	.11	.17	.49	1.13	2.50	4.76	1.35	7.12	9.99	27.76
30	.20	.20	.38	.94	2.53	3.77	4.69	.54	1.83	1.77	16.85
35	.26	.35	1.09	3.38	7.82	6.51	2.98	.24	(2/)	0	22.63
40	.37	.65	2.03	5.37	5.07	1.30	.02	0	0	0	14.81
45	.23	.64	1.97	3.25	.92	.06	0	0	0	0	7.07
50	.28	.78	1.52	1.40	.16	.01	0	0	0	0	4.15
55	1.28	2.21	2.37	.85	.02	0	0	0	0	0	6.73
All	2.76	4.94	9.53	15.68	17.65	14.15	12.45	2.13	8.95	11.76	100.00

1/ Zero (0) indicates no production.
2/ Production less than 0.005 percent.